

# ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

## *Policies and Procedures*

***Title:*** Geographic Assignments and Reassignments

***Number:*** 4321

***Date:*** 2/28/94

***Originating Office:*** Economics Management Staff

***This Replaces:*** 3321 dated 2/7/84

***Distribution:*** All Agencies

This P&P establishes policies and assigns responsibilities to management and employees concerning geographic assignments and reassignments.

## Table Of Contents

1.	Introduction . . . . .	3
2.	Policy . . . . .	3
	NASS . . . . .	3
	ERS . . . . .	4
3.	Summary of Responsibilities . . . . .	5

## **1. Introduction**

This P&P establishes policy and assigns responsibilities regarding geographic assignment and reassignments. For the purposes of this P&P, a geographic reassignment is a change of an employee from a position in one geographic location to the same or a different position in another location. Supervisors must carefully adhere to the policies in this P&P, because they have a direct impact on whether employees are eligible for severance pay or discontinued service retirement, if they refuse to accept an assignment to a new geographic location.

## **2. Policy**

Agency heads establish policies regarding the assignment and reassignment of employees to geographic locations. The geographical location of employees depends upon

- the objectives of the agency's program activities;
- the need to maximize the employees' contributions to the agency mission;
- the need to provide employees with developmental experiences through rotational work assignments; and
- the employees' personal preferences.

Since EAS, EMS, OE, and WAOB do not have field locations, there is no special policy. NASS and ERS have specific rules as outlined in the next two sections.

### **NASS**

NASS provides its professional employees with a variety of developmental experiences including formal training, short courses, Board Calls, and work assignment rotations within and between geographical locations. The element most essential to the success of this approach has been the practical experience that rotational work assignments provide. NASS provides work assignments in different agricultural or program areas to give employees a broader base of knowledge and understanding that will make them better equipped to assume higher-level responsibilities.

Since NASS selects its professional employees with the full expectation that they will strive to progress

to higher levels of responsibility, a willingness to accept geographic reassignment is a condition of employment within the professional ranks of the Agency. Failure to accept reassignment may be grounds for separation without eligibility for severance pay or discontinued service retirement.

The information in the above paragraph should appear in each professional employee's position description, except positions filled through NASS's Upward Mobility Program, which may be exempt from the mobility policy up to the GS-9 level.

## ERS

ERS has permanently assigned all staff to the Agency's Washington, DC, area headquarters. It may, however, assign personnel to field locations in connection with specific projects for fixed periods, normally not longer than 3 years. Employees may not be assigned to field locations solely for educational purposes, unless they are selected for long-term training programs.

Prior to assignment or reassignment, division directors must provide approval memoranda signed by the Administrator or Associate Administrator, the division directors themselves, and employees. Division directors should send these to EMS's Personnel Division for inclusion in official personnel folders. Such memoranda must specify the conditions of assignments, including planned dates for return to headquarters.

### **3. Summary of Responsibilities**

#### **Agency Heads or Designees**

Set policy on geographic assignments and reassignments and order changes in duty station.

#### **ERS Division Directors**

Recommend and provide justification for each assignment to a location other than headquarters.

Obtain the signatures of the Administrator, themselves, and employees on memoranda stating the terms of reassignments.

Submit memoranda to EMS's Personnel Division, prior to the reassignment.

#### **EMS Personnel Division**

File memoranda regarding reassignments into official personnel folders.

#### **Employees**

Accept geographic reassignment when made in accordance with this P&P or face the possibility of separation without eligibility for severance pay or discontinued service retirement.